

**КОНФЕРЕНЦИИ**

# CALL FOR PAPERS — Joint Conferences IREC 2012/ ESA RN 17

## Challenges for Public and Private Sector Industrial Relations and Unions in Times of Crisis and Austerity

*September 5–7, 2012 CIES-ISCTE/IUL, Lisbon, Portugal*

We are pleased to announce that in 2012 the annual Industrial Relations in Europe conference (IREC) and the mid-term conference of the ESA Research Network «Work, Employment and Industrial Relations» (RN 17) will be jointly organized as back to back and complementary events at ISCTE-IUL in Lisbon, Portugal, from September 5–7.

The IREC-ESA/RN 17 2012 joint-conference will consist of various plenary and track sessions focusing on the impacts of crisis and austerity upon the institutions and actors of European industrial relations systems in both the private and public sectors and the methodological issues involved in their study. We are interested in discussing the concrete impact of the crisis upon industrial relations systems in Europe and the comparative and methodological implications of these transformations. We are especially interested in highlighting the differential impacts of austerity upon public sector employment relations as well as the transformations within the private sector and the new links between labour and other social and political movements.

### Call for Papers: IREC 2012/ESA RN 17

It is inevitable that the greatest recession in the post-war period will have tangible effects in the realm of employment relations at all levels. These effects are already visible in the world and in the concerns of many researchers in the field of industrial relations. The EU faces the double challenge of the international and European crisis and competition with emergent economies, in particular China. This has triggered policies promoting further deregulation of labour relations, in particular regarding wage policy, and consequently attempts to limit the autonomy of collective bargaining. There is an almost universal trend towards «lean» public services and administration, accelerating recent tendencies towards New Public Management, bringing about significant transformations of employment relations in the public sector. However, while the initial target of current austerity measures is the welfare state and its pre-existing standards of labour relations, the crisis of the financial system has provided incentives and justification for more general transformations of industrial relations. This reality has been particularly strong in the «peripheral» countries of the Euro (the «PIGS»), but has spilled over across Europe as a whole.

These significant and qualitatively new challenges to the institutions and actors of European industrial relations systems in both the private and public sectors will be the central focus of this year's IREC conference.

- What is the concrete impact of the crisis upon industrial relations systems in Europe, and what are the comparative implications of these transformations?
- What are the differential impacts of austerity upon private and public sector employment and labour relations?
- To what extent have the crises accelerated transformations already in progress in European industrial relations, and to what extent have they spawned qualitatively new challenges?

- Have the crises accentuated the complex trends towards both convergence and divergence across European industrial relations?
- How are unions and employers' associations in the private and public sectors facing up to the varied challenges of current transformations?
- Are new forms of social movements and collective action around labour issues emerging in these crises? If so, which; and what, if any, are the emergent relationships between old and new forms of collective action?

We invite both junior and senior researchers in the diverse fields of industrial relations to submit high quality and innovative papers for presentation on these and their themes:

- Industrial Relations and the Global Crisis of Capitalism: Issues in Theory and Research;
- Industrial relations and Unions in Public Employment;
- Changing forms of Industrial Relations Governance in the Private Sector;
- Survival or Renewal of Collective Bargaining and Social Dialogue in the Crisis;
- Trade Union Decline or Revitalization;
- Trade Unionism and Social and Political Movements;
- Industrial relations and the Attacks upon the Welfare State: What's left of the European Social Model?
- European Works Councils and Trade Union Coordination in Europe.

Research in the field of work, employment and industrial relations has to a significant extent been based upon a methodological nationalism where the nation state is taken as the dominant unit of analysis for understanding processes and outcomes. Nevertheless, the global, international and trans-national nature of the present economic crisis presents decisive challenges to such a methodology. If our understanding of work, employment and industrial relations is bound to nation states, how can we adequately analyze the trans-national phenomena peculiar to the current global economic crisis?

Following upon the thematic focus of the IREC, the ESA RN 17 seeks to deepen and advance debate regarding the advantages and disadvantages of «old» and «new» methodological approaches to the study of the transformation of work, employment and industrial relations. We therefore welcome papers representing different methodological angles that address current issues such as the following themes and questions:

- Methodological Crises in Times of Economic Crisis;
- Labour Markets: Segmentation and Social Inequalities;
- Restructuring and Work Organisation and Workplace Labour Relations;
- Perspectives for the European Social Model and Europeanisation;

- Migration and Its Impact on Social Policy and Social Exclusion
- Industrial Conflict and Labour Disputes: A Comeback in Times of the Crisis?

We expect to receive theoretical and empirical (both qualitative and quantitative) papers. As in previous conferences, cross-national papers are especially welcome.

For IREC:

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For ESA RN 17:

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Raquel Rego — ISEG-UTL

Hermes Costa — CES-UC

Elísio Estanque — CES-UC

The conferences will be hosted at ISCTE-Lisbon University Institute by the Centro de Investigação e de Estudos em Sociologia.

## Paper Proposals

We are accepting abstracts of 250 words. Please seek to address the issues of the streams for the conferences and the proposal should indicate the appropriate stream. Paper submissions and queries should be addressed to [IREC-RN17-2012.cies@iscte.pt](mailto:IREC-RN17-2012.cies@iscte.pt) or through the on-line submission process at <http://conferencias.cies.iscte.pt/index.php/IREC2012/irec2012>

## Deadlines

April 30, 2012 — submission of abstract proposals

May 30, 2012 — acceptance of papers

June 15, 2012 — early registration and payment

August 1, 2012 — submission of papers